

How safe is your rental aircraft?

WELCOME TO THE NCLR FLYING SAFETY BRIEF. This is the Aug 2004 briefing



All CAP and CAP liaison pilots can enjoy the benefit of the well maintained aircraft fleet that the CAP operates. While we don't currently have a need to rent aircraft in an official capacity, there are provisions for this in addition to any opportunities we take for personal flying. How safe is the rental aircraft that you may be flying? Hopefully you don't take the FBO on their word - kick the tires - and go flying! Below is a portion of an article published by the St. Louis FSDO office.

ALL NCLR STAFF - ACTIVE DUTY, RESERVISTS, AND STATE DIRECTORS: REMEMBER IF YOU DO PERFORM ANY PERSONAL FLYING YOU MUST BE BRIEFED BY THE DIRECTOR OF TRAINING AND HAVE COMPLETED A FORM 410. LINE OF DUTY/INSURANCE ISSUES ARE AT STAKE!

Have you ever seen a facility that charges one rate for airworthy aircraft and another rate for not quite airworthy aircraft? Of course not. We wouldn't even consider flying something like that. We have a responsibility to determine the airworthiness of anything that we are pilot in command of and should be given access to aircraft maintenance records that will help us make that determination. Keep in mind that it would be courteous to arrange with the rental FBO a time that is convenient to produce the aircraft maintenance records for our viewing. To expect them to drop everything 30 minutes before our scheduled flying time so they have to locate and deliver the records isn't fair to them.

On the other hand if the rental FBO balks at our request to view the maintenance records that should sound an alarm in our head. First, we should ask ourselves why? Then ask them why? There may be some compelling reason that they are reluctant to make them available. Sometimes the fear of losing the records drives an owner or operator to hesitate in turning them over to someone who wants to review them. This may be a reasonable concern but we still need to verify that the aircraft is legal. The bottom line is that as the operator, we are ultimately responsible for flying an airworthy aircraft. If things go badly during the flight, we must defend our actions and decisions against the requirements of the FAR's.

Your safety and your passenger's safety, as well as your peace of mind, rests on your ability to know that the aircraft you fly is airworthy and you should be able to PROVE IT!